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7. Only vegetables whose spiritual essence does not have to be preserved are cooked, "for to cook is to shatter the soul."

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In each village are grown one or several small fields of tomatoes, called "Faro's fields," or "fields of twins." The fruits of these fields are reserved for the worship of the spirit (1).

1. On the site of the ancient village of Soroba, at the edge of a pond located near the present-day village, there are two rectangular fields of tomatoes dedicated to male twins and four square fields dedicated to female twins in the village. Each year the villagers gather at the edge of the pond for a ceremony. The symbolic words relating to twins are recited and a prayer is said, to be followed by ablutions.

The fruit that is harvested is offered to the spirit by squashing it on a neighboring tree trunk.

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/49/ All metals belong to Faro. The seven /sic/ principal metals are the following: copper (male), brass (female), gold, silver, tin, and iron. Copper and brass come from the fifth sky (koblenkaba). They descend at each thunderclap and, along with the "thunderstones," penetrated into the soil. They were discovered by a diviner at the bottom of a pond that had dried up because of a broken taboo. Be-
[301] cause of their divine origin, copper and brass represent "Faro's sounds." These sounds twist themselves around the spiralled copper or brass earrings that everyone wears and penetrate the eardrum, thus making it possible to hear words. Gold plays a part in the building of certain altars (boli) to which it confers strength and stability.

The sacrifices made with or on copper, brass, or gold have a restraining influence on the spirit for they are of his own essence.

No woman wearing copper, brass, or gold jewelry, may cross the Niger without opening her luggage out of deference to the spirit, for "all ornaments belong to him and often must be returned to him after death.

[784] It is taboo to bring metal into contact with cow's butter, an oily substance that does not allow water to penetrate.

776 brought to the middle of the river and thrown in while the villagers
782 prayed the spirit to give the village his protection and to bring rain to future harvests.

Faro's Taboos

776 All of Faro's subjects, in particular the Bambara of both sexes and
784 of all ages, are requested to respect a certain number of taboos.

The black earth, bogo fi, of the river banks, used ritually in many instances, would be excellent in pottery making. The women potters, however, cannot use it because it blackens in the process of baking. No pottery that has been fired may be washed in those places haunted by the spirit (1).

1. At Ségou, numerous drownings are blamed on the increasing frequency with which this taboo is broken.

[242] Butter in many places is forbidden by Faro and may not be preserved in water. (2)

2. This taboo is linked to the relation between Faro and the Peul, but the nature of their relationship has not been clarified.

No one crosses the river without opening his luggage and presenting Faro with the gold, copper, or food it contains. As a rule, the wearing of metals is forbidden in those places haunted by the spirit.

776 The principal taboo concerns menstrual blood which was originally
784 caused to flow because of the sins and impurity of Mousso /52/
841 Koroni. No menstruating woman may visit the places inhabited by Faro; none may draw water, wash clothes or cooking utensils, or cleanse herself in any of these spots. In addition, a man whose wife is in such condition must refrain from appearing at religious ceremonies or, if he is a priest, from performing the ritual.

In this part of Africa, as in many others, menses are conceived of as a necessary flow of empty blood, impure because it has not contributed to the formation of the foetus, the embryo of which each

776 784 841

woman carries within her. (1) Deprived of Faro's essentially im-

1. See G. Dieterlen, "Mécanisme de l'impureté chez les Dogon" /The Mechanism of Impurity Among the Dogon/ Journal de la Société des Africanistes, Vol. 17 (1947), pp. 82 ff.

pregnating power and contrary to its generating action, this blood is considered evil, and all that recalls it or comes near it is excluded from the ritual.

Faro's Character, Role, and Deed

776 The principal characteristics of Faro's deed in creation are: omnipotence, omnipresence, and benevolence. Everything, whether animate or inanimate, depends on him in time and space.

The Bambara are extremely sensitive to Faro's power over the universe. They say: "Neither by day nor by night does Faro stop his incessant work." He sees to the efficient workings of the order which he inaugurated and which requires constant attention. His time is divided: from dawn until evening he occupies himself with the earth and its inhabitants; the next twelve hours' work is devoted to aquatic animals and members of his own family. Procreation depends on his will; it is he who, in the sky and in the water, controls the physical and spiritual life of all beings: the soul and vital force. In due order, with which the humans cooperate by observing his laws, he maintains life and makes the new bodies participate in the functioning of the universe according to a regular rhythm. Souls are reincarnated, assuring the continuity of spiritual forces in the world. The same power directs all acts of individual and social life: birth, circumcision, excision, initiation, marriage, agricultural work, voyages, war or peace.

Throughout the development of individual life, it is Faro who maintains man's physical integrity: he gives him health, necessary to
[753] action. Sickness is always /53/ considered a loss of strength which the individual must ask Faro to restore. The sovereign master of man's life, he has the power to take it away from him.

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828 D. Traore. "Le Tere chez les Bambara du Ségou /The Tere among the Bambara of Ségou/," Notes africaines, January 1947, pp. 29-31.

774 Man is considered the bearer of a strong tere. Because he talks, is well informed, and knows good from evil, he is responsible for his own life and that of his family. The tere is the gaining of consciousness.

774 This aspect of the tere means that only domestic animals, whose life depends on man, are bearers of this principle. Wild animals
825 "have a hard and barren life; they have to labor to feed themselves; so they do not have to bear the burden of a tere." All that lives independently of man is without a tere. (1)

1. However, according to certain informants, wild animals might also be endowed with several tere for different parts of the body. In this case, it would seem that the term designates especially the animal's physical peculiarities and not its consciousness, as in the case of man and domestic animals.

The tere of domestic animals is not as powerful as that of man, but is also revealed by external signs. For instance, a horse that swings its head from right to left while it is tied up has a very bad tere; it is said to be its duga fufa (2). Such a beast is undesirable in

2. Literally, "the swaying of the hawk." It is said that when a hawk descends on its prey, it swings its head right and left in order to see the prey better.

a home for it "chases away happiness and success." A wounded domestic animal attacks its enemy with its tere.

774 The fact that the tere is that part of the person which suffers the
784 consequences of impurity testifies to the bonds that unite man to the
827 outer world. The tere is disturbed when a taboo, tne, is broken. If it is a good tere, it leaves the person; if it is a bad one, it becomes worse. On the other hand, the brezking of a taboo provokes a physiological change in the blood which loses its red color and becomes

pale. It is manifested by a loss of strength and by illnesses affecting the body openings: the man becomes blind and deaf-mute. He may also become paralyzed. Generally he does not die but is pursued by ills until he purifies himself.

In addition, the tere changes when it is detached from its normal support; it then becomes nyama, a force which acts outside the body. Manifest in action, the fact can already be sensed in the spoken word, the bearer of nyama which immediately affects /63/ the person to whom it is addressed. The consequences of this action of the word are manifold.

At the time of death, the tere is completely liberated. Transformed into nyama which leaves the body, it then becomes a very active form which, in certain cases, can attack whomever it considers responsible for the death (1).

1. This very visible but incomplete aspect of the nyama is the one that has been most studied heretofore. On this subject, see the works of the Abbé Henry, Ch. Monteil, H. Labouret, L. Tauxier. Furthermore, in the sky, in space, and on earth, there is a nyama independent of the tere. The nature of this general and vital element has not been completely clarified by investigation.

Sacrificial beings, men or animals, or plants for ritual use never release a dangerous nyama. Their spiritual principles and forces are channeled in the course of the ritual and directed toward the benefit of a supernatural power through the altar. The same is true of domestic animals immolated for consumption, in which case their forces are used over again and their death causes no disorder since it was foreseen by Faro's law concerning food.

On the other hand, the nyama of the bush animals (nyama baka) leave their dead bodies and pursue the hunter (2). To protect himself

2. The sick man may be treated in the following manner: seven (or a multiple of seven) cowrie shells are thrown upon the hide of the animal

551 The institution of the device, with all its elaborations, has the
576 effect of confirming people in their bodies, their spiritual principles, and their social functions. Except for the cases of emigration mentioned above, the occasions are rare indeed when an individual is obliged to change his name or device during his life. A woman keeps her father's barama even after marriage.

551 An illegitimate child receives neither the name nor the device of
848 his family. They may be given him later if the father makes himself
564 known. A Bambara who contracts a misalliance, for example, by
783 marrying the daughter of a blacksmith or a griot, will bring into the world impure children who will never have a right to their father's barama (1).

1. Such a child is said to be a sofali (literally, horse donkey), that is, a bastard.

552 We must add that the prerogative of having a device is not limited
782 to humans. All animate beings, many /80/ inanimate ones, the elements of nature, places, villages, plants, animals, and all the supernatural powers have theirs which men address during prayers.

The Taboo

●784 One or several eating taboos, tne or tana, are attached to the
[551] family name and are observed by all who bear the name. According to certain initiates, the taboos were decreed by Faro when he determined the food proper to each species (2) after having classified the

2. See p. 52.

beings of creation. For the common man, the origin of the taboo is always the subject of a tale or legend and justifies the bonds between an ancestor of the family and the animal or plant designated. Most frequently, the animal has helped the man, has saved his life, or the other way around; or else, following some serious events, the ancestor was transformed into an animal or plant. Numerous versions of the origins of such bonds are given.

784 It has not been possible heretofore to consider all aspects of the various taboos. On the other hand, the great number of versions concerning their origin indicates that the current story, told to all who pass by, conceals much deep notions of the categories that indicate the bonds linking men to animals and plants (1). It would also be

1. See also L. Tauxier. La Religion bambara (Théorie des Ntana et des tabous /Theory of the Ntana and Taboos/), pp. 114-138.

appropriate to study the relations between the species, between animals and plants and minerals in terms of the spiritual forces that animate them.

Whatever it may be, the taboo confers on man his title of nobility; not to possess one is degrading. It assures the protection of the group that observes it. Thus, the hyenas of Konodimini protect the village inhabitants who feed them.

Examples of taboo:

784 TT3 The Traoré family has crocodile flesh as its taboo. An ancestor called Makyon, having transformed himself into a crocodile, fed his family during a famine that lasted six years; he fished and brought the catch to the members of his family.

In the seventh year, since the famine still raged, the Traoré decided to kill him for food. In the morning, when he appeared with the fish he had caught, an old man advanced to attack him. /81/ The animal stopped him and predicted he would die if he pursued his plan. The man paid no attention and wounded the beast which had enough strength left, however, to return to the river. The old man regretted his act and the others tried to disassociate themselves from the responsibility. The following morning the crocodile came out of the river and died at their feet so that they might see what they had done. The guilty man was in turn killed by his family and the two corpses were buried together in the same shroud. When all was over, the chief revealed that Maydon /sic/ was a member of the family, that as a member of the same race he had been feeding his kin

784 during the famine, and that in the future the crocodile would be taboo
783 to the Traoré as a sign of gratitude for his gift and as an apology for the murder committed.

The taboo of the Diara family is the lion, whose name they bear. In the olden days two old friends were always in the habit of hunting together with arrows and spears. In the course of a long famine, their weapons broke and they were not able to find others. In order to feed their families, they attacked wild animals with bare hands; the one would stun his victims with his fists, and the other would skin them.

Gradually the life they were leading changed their behavior. They no longer washed, their hair and beards grew, and thick hair covered their body. Their nails became so long and so hard that they used them to slice meat and to dig the earth. They even forgot the language they had spoken and only communicated by grunts.

They fought with the spirits to gain a foothold in those places ordinarily reserved for the latter. They no longer returned to their village. Their parents searched for them, but as soon as they saw people, they ran away. They ended by walking on all fours and appeared like the animals they pursued.

One day as they lay sleeping next to each other, they mated and the stronger one impregnated the weaker to give birth, a little later, to two lion cubs. The men who saw them in the bush with their offspring decided that hereafter they could not kill a lion for it had their blood in its veins. Even today, when a Diara meets a lion, the animal lies down, "so ashamed to be descended from the mating of two men who had become beasts."

784 These two examples, selected from many others, illustrate the relations between man and animal. These appear even more clearly in the mechanism set off by the breaking of the adopted taboo.

Indeed, the first consequence of any infraction is the offender's loss of the seeds in his collarbone, a symbol of his basic sustenance. He becomes "an empty granary" and, deprived of his strength, is unable to contend against that of the wounded animal /82/ attacking him. The pain he feels at that moment is proof of the state of his physical and psychic inferiority. Any breaking of a taboo affects first the eyes, then the other openings of the body.

784 If the animal is wounded, it delegates its tere to warn the guilty
783 man of the sin committed, but makes no attempt on his life since it is his ally. On the other hand, its death liberates its nyama which

784 783 acts more energetically. But it is even more serious to eat one's taboo than to ill it, for then the person cannot get rid of his victim's nyama and must suffer all the consequences.

The guilty person goes to the shore of the Niger and in a loud voice, discloses the facts to Faro while making him an offering (millet mash, copper, etc.), then he drinks a little water and goes home. If he lives too far from the river, he goes to a remote place and acts in the same way by spilling a little of his own blood as a sign of expiation. These acts have the effect of rectifying everything with Faro whom he has offended by breaking the established order. Next, he undergoes the purification rites. Their agent is his ally semãnku and the rites are carried out at an intersection, dangu (1). The effect of such rites is

[602] 1. See p. 183. In certain cases the purification may be carried out by a kinsman of an ascending generation and may include ablutions with water consecrated by a prayer addressed to Faro.

to rid him of his victim's nyama, and then to reinstate the symbol of the eight life-giving cereal seeds in his collarbone: thus he recovers his lost strength. After his recovery, the old men of his family summon him and give him some stern advice for another breaking of the taboo cannot be atoned by any purification: the animal's nyama will no no longer leave the repeating offender who may die of it.

784 Voluntary infractions, which are very rare, of course bring about far more serious consequences for the person in question since his responsibility is involved. This is not so in the opposite case. If a man has eaten his taboo without knowing it during a meal taken at the home of another, the animal's nyama may attack those responsible: either the host or his wife becomes ill. The guilty woman must then [201] ask the man's forgiveness. On her knee and with her hands at the back, she discloses the facts to the person she has injured who may ask for time to think and make her wait in order to punish her. Otherwise he demands three kola nuts with which he carried out the dyanzani or "replacement." He throws them in the bush or gives them to the first poor person he meets. A few days later the responsible person is liberated.

778 Some boli are individual, sometimes inherited from an ancestor
782 and consecrated to their owner whose strength they maintain. Others are collective and consecrated to supernatural powers which protect the life of the community.

778 The taboos relating to beings whose soul "impregnates" the boli
782 and to the elements which compose them are decreed at the time /94/
784 of their making. They must be scrupulously respected by those responsible and by those officiating. The boli are generally placed in a sheltered spot either in sanctuaries or in an isolated room of the house, which no one enters without the permission of those responsible. This is done in order to avoid the dangers resulting from broken taboos which would affect the integrity of the boli as well as that of its owners. The handling of the boli, dangerous as it is, is restricted to priests, to the head of the family, or to the owner.

782 Victims most commonly offered on all altars are domestic animals such as fowl, cattle, sheep, and goats. However, on the altars of hunters and those of the uncircumcised, only wild animals are immolated.

The color of the victim is determined by the quality of the being to which it is consecrated as well as by the altar itself. Animals of
[822] a red color are generally killed on the boli of religious societies, thereby increasing the nyama which they contain. White, the symbol of light and purity, is reserved for Faro.

782 The death of the victim is used as an occasion for divination.
787 The throat is cut in such a way as to prolong the death struggle so that the officiating person may interpret the position of the body. The cutting process is followed by eating which has the function of communion. Furthermore, certain parts of the body (the liver) are left on the altar; others such as the jawbone, feathers, and hair are kept as tokens by the person offering the sacrifice.

782 The ritual is usually accompanied by offerings of boiled millet as "refreshment," since the blood is given to the altar as a nourishment. Kola nuts, chosen for their shape and color, are divided into two portions: the officiating person chews one half and spits it out onto the altar before eating the other half.

In former times, human sacrifice was also practiced. These took place in serious cases involving the kingdom, the king, or the chiefs. The usual victim was the albino.

291 activity is not involved. Nevertheless, a woman puts on an indigo
773 loincloth the day she resumes sexual relations with her husband after
822 the end of her menses; she retains it until pregnancy. When she is sure
531 of her condition, she puts the loincloth in the sun to purify it and will place the newborn child in it to remind him later that he owes his life to his parents. A dead person who has broken a taboo is buried [764 in an indigo shroud, the only reminder of light being a white cotton 784] thread which is placed on the corpse as an expression of apology and forgiveness. Since indigo is taboo in most of Faro's sacred places, no one wears it during sacrifices or religious ceremonies.

White and indigo complement each other. To twist a white and [789] an indigo thread together to make a string used for holding an amulet is to "roll together happiness and unhappiness, as in life."

The dye wolo is the color of yellow copper. It is in this color that the newly circumcised are dressed after the operation and until they are healed. Red, mbegu, is the color of copper and of blood. Hunters who wear a tunic of mbegu are "covered with a garment of blood." The band kayo (Pl. III, a, 1), in which are found these two colors, indigo and white, reproduces the rainbow: the white intervals are symbols of the word and of purity. /110/ A person making a sacrifice sews a piece of this band on his clothing to indicate that he is circumcised, that he is a hunter, and that he is truthful in his actions and words. A band is hung at the gate of the northern entry to the village in order to protect its inhabitants from dangers coming from outside. A man wears it when he has been ill or has suffered serious financial or family difficulties. On the altars, on the doorways, the colors are represented by millet mash, blood, and kola nut extract. [821 As the rainbow keeps away the rain and dries up water, the kayo 784] strip may not be worn near the river or during sexual intercourse, for it is Faro's taboo.

The band sirakele (literally, a road) (Pl. III, a, 2) represents Faro's descent from the seventh part of the sky down to the seventh part of the earth, the indigo stripe being the dyi fi, "black water," the spirit's earth seat. When put on the loincloth of a married woman, it expresses her rectitude and the good behavior she intends to maintain towards her husband. When worn by a traveler, it prevents him from losing his way.

291 The buguni (1) (Pl. III, a, 3) is "the sun ray Faro gave to Pemba
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1. The word designates the band's place of origin, Bougouni.

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Taboos Provided with vital force and a soul, ni, the forge, a living being, is surrounded by taboos aimed at protecting its material and spiritual integrity.

These taboos, numbering seven, are peculiar to the forge and to the altars which it contains; they concern not only the /123/ blacksmiths, but also his clients, the passers-by, whatever sex they may belong.

[253] 1. None may cook meat on the fire of the forge; it would be equivalent to "eating the meat of the Soba spirits." To break this rule deprives the fire of its strength and causes the abdomen of the person breaking the taboo to swell (1).

1. It is said of the culprit: soko dyeni bala, fa ta sababu yalla: "he is full of meat cooked on the fire of the forge."

2. No insult may be uttered near the forge, particularly if it is of a sexual nature (2). This would be equivalent to insulting the fire;

2. Neni teke fã nda la: "Insults are not to be spoken at the door of the forge."

the flame would waver and, despite the bellows, no heat would rise from the hearth.

[201] 3. The sole of the foot and the palm of the hand are never presented to the fire, for the forge is alive and just as these same gestures made towards another human being would bring about physical disorders, so the various parts of the forge are vulnerable and may break (the hammer or anvil) or tear (the membrane of the bellows) (3).

3. Se ndege tere te jira fa na: "The tere of the sole of the foot must not be presented to the forge."

4. Any quarrel or misunderstanding disturbs the forge, upsets it, and harms the work (4).

4. Dadyuguya, filibatya, kunasirinlenya, konodyuguya te kẹ fã nda la: "Meanness,

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hypocrisy, humiliation, and cheating
are not done at the door of the forge."

5. Envy, jealousy, and ill humor are generally bad for the blacksmith who loses his "turn of the hand." He must "have a pure heart" (1).

1. Numu te keleya note i bolo na tye:
"The blacksmith must not be jealous,
otherwise his hand is spoiled."

6. A mirror must never be brought near the forge; it would take hold of its soul which resides in the axe at the altar (2).

2. Dugalle te gere fã na a kanana; ka fã
ni ta: "The mirror must not be brought near
the forge; it will take the soul from the forge."

[834] 7. Sexual relations near the forge prevent its functioning (3).

3. Noa te gere fa nda la: "No obscene
action may take place near the door of
the forge."

Breaking the taboos of the forge is equivalent to attacking the virility of the blacksmith, for the bellows are his testicles. Thus the artisans present themselves naked before the culprit to shame him; he is seated on the communal anvil and water in which large [783] millet (keninge) has been soaking is poured over his head to purify the instrument (4).

4. If the fault is irreparable, the kneeling chief crushes three grains of large millet (keninge) on the anvil, a gesture which symbolizes the death of the culprit whose name he pronounces at the same time.

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[561] the society during a public consecration which she receives with several others, the group forming an age grade.

After an apprenticeship of seven days, the potters decide upon the date of the ceremony which is celebrated at the firing spot near the altars. Each member provides a hairpin (bandigi), which represents her on this occasion, and the skin of a hedgehog. Disrobed in front of the assembled villages, each girl is seated in turn on the altar as an aged woman examines her genitals to verify her virginity and the proper execution of the excision.

/126/ If the young girl is no longer a virgin, she is publicly de-
[831] clared dangadé (literally, bastard) and finds herself automatically excluded from the society; she will never be able to receive the potter's title. Otherwise, a proclamation is made immediately to the great joy of the public. If the excision has not been judged
[304] sufficient, the patient is given the title of potter after having submitted to a new operation performed in such a way that the blood runs over the pottery (1).

1. If excision is not possible, the operation takes the form of a wound inflicted with the hedgehog's skin (see p. 243).

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867 An old woman then appears seated before members of the age grade and instructs them. She tells of the origin and history of pottery, apprising them of the difficulties of the craft such as fatigue, burns, etc. She teaches them patience towards the client and enumerates the rules which will have to be observed during their lifetime: to be pure in heart and to hate no one; not to undertake work shortly after having had sexual relations; to work in silence; to respect all taboos in general.

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431 She then makes a libation of karite oil on the altar and rubs it on the bodies of the initiates who must run their tongues over the pottery, thus making an oath. Sheep, brought by the initiates' parents, are then killed by having their throat cut over the hearth in the name of the potters while the elders of the society present to the initiates gifts consisting of several pots which they will sell for profit while waiting for their first work. This gift is moreover a sign of adoption.

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784 The utensils are made with clay, mbogo pasa, taken from the bottom of the watercourse or along the river's edge; they belong to

323 Faro. These places have as taboos the wearing of indigo and pregnancy.
317 No pregnant woman may approach them without provoking the death
784 of the child she is carrying, thus ultimately impairing the durability of pottery and seriously harming the society of which she is a member.

323 An annual sacrifice is offered by the potters at the end of the winter
796 season when, the level of the river having dropped and the banks lowered, they return for the first time to collect the clay which they need. Dressed in white, they bring out their hoes and the sickle with which they cut the damp grasses used to cover the pots on the hearth during firing, while the head of the society carries the altars. The objects are placed in a pile on a bed of nyama fibers used for separating them from the ground. The throats of two red roosters are cut open over this pile while a prayer is addressed to Faro, requesting authorization to take the /127/ mbogo pasa during the year, and seeking his protection and help for the work of the society's membership.

The potters make an annual offering to their altars on the day their husbands sacrifice on the forges. Immediately after the libations, they come and squat before the forge altar on which they throw some ten cowrie shells. They then go to the ñintin, undress, and present to it their genitals from the front and from the back, this gesture being an indication of their submission to the spirits of pottery which are the same as those of the forge. Still naked, they circle the pile of ashes left from the last firing and light a big bonfire; this fire attracts the bee eaters, tatugu kononi, which circle over the flames. They shoot some down with a sling, cook them, and reduce them to ashes which they mix with karite oil; they rub their bodies with this mixture before purifying themselves by going through the flames. As an offering to the spirits, they then throw pots on the fire which they put out before returning home.

323 The potters cultivate together a small ritual field in which a fe-
244 male twin sows white peas, tikaninkuru, symbols of their right hand. The produce of this harvest is eaten communally on a mound, walawala, after an offering of several seeds is made to the altars and tools. A potter whose tools are broken by the fire must go through a purification with the products of this field.

326 The wives of blacksmiths, whether or not they are potters, are
304 skilled in practicing excision on young girls.

794 or Koma/," Outremer, 1929; H. Labouret, Les Manding et leur langue.

794 The Komo
794 society, komo tyew (literally, men, people of the Komo) is composed
561 of all circumcised men, with the exception of the griot who may under no condition become members, after an initiation performed according to the age grade, the members of which are called tonyaw. The hierarchy is rigorously respected: an earlier age grade will always be ahead of the one that follows it in all circumstances of secular or religious life. The Komo recognizes a chief, komotigi (literally, master or owner of the Komo) who preferably belongs to the caste of blacksmiths and whose function is hereditary. The son automatically assumes command of the age grade which follows that of his father. Upon the latter's death, he changes his age grade and becomes the head of his father's. In the case where the owner of the Komo dies
[304] young and his eldest son, who is to inherit the office, is not yet circumcised, he is made to undergo the operation in the night following the death, and on the following day is proclaimed chief (1).

1. In La Religion Bambara, L. Tauxier points out that in some villages the chief of the Komo exercises his power only during a seven-year term. At the end of seven years an election takes place and the function is not hereditary.

794 Because of the importance of his functions, the chief of the Komo
784 is made to respect a great number of taboos. In particular he may not penetrate into the sanctuary if he has not been chaste during the past twenty-four hours. If the taboo is broken, he must warn the men of his age grade and sacrifice two roosters upon the altars to purify himself. His wife is initiated (for she is apt to see certain ritual
[562] objects generally hidden from women because of her intimacy with the chief), but she is not present at any of the ceremonies to which only the members are /144/ admitted. If she commits adultery she
[837] brings about her husband's exclusion from the society, not only as chief but also as member.

794 The chief is often assisted by two elders belonging to his age grade,
561 whose advice he seeks in all cases concerning the community. In addition, he is always helped by young initiates. If one of these

794 778 during the seven days following the death and are returned to the heir of the deceased (son or brother); they remain permanently in the sanctuary only if the dead man has no descendants. They are held up by two wooden stakes called čin ta bere (literally, sticks which collect inheritance) which keep the souls of the dead and which contain at the top wood dust from Makanta Djigui's canoe and gold at the bottom. These stakes feed the boli which they hold and the souls of the dead which they contain, thus demonstrating that the "Komo never abandons anyone and that men without descendants remain with it for ever."

[784] The taboos concerning the nimara boli are numerous and strict: it may not be removed from the sanctuary except for funerals (1). No

1. See p. 247.

woman must ever see it. No foreign cult could ever conceivably be celebrated in its presence.

On the second floor is located the ñõ boli (literally, altar of millet) which contains an invigorating power intended for the society's crops. It is composed of a sac divided into six pockets which contain (from top to bottom) at the left: small millet, fonio, and copper; at the right: large millet, rice and other cereals, and gold. The sac, which opens at the top, receives at the time of agricultural ceremonies (sowing and harvest) the blood of victims offered by members of the millet society, ñõtõ. It must always remain damp with sacrificial blood so that the seeds which it contains will always live.

The ñõ boli is also tied to two stakes called ñõ boli kane (literally, protection of the ñõ boli) which contain in a hollowed-out /147/ section some millet and gold; it is tied to the stakes by threads which bring it the forces they contain.

The ñõ boli watches over the growth of cereals: germination, formation of the ears, maturation. It is responsible for the "head of millet" (2).

2. Each farmer is the owner of an individual ñõ boli which is placed in a subordinate position under that of the Komó. In addition, the Komo's ñõ boli is in close touch with the ñõ boli of the Kworè, a society whose purpose is to obtain

794 778 the rain necessary for cultivation (see p. 217). The agricultural role of the Komo will be described by S. de Ganay in Techniques et rites de l'agriculture.

794 778 784 The main taboo of the ñõ boli is the loss or waste of food. If even a grain of cereal drops to the ground, or into the fire, the members of the millet society are responsible for picking it up and eating it; otherwise the Komo will punish for the failure to do so and the harvest suffers.

794 778 726 The third floor contains the nyama boli, a repository of the forces (nyama) of individuals who have died a violent death (murder, war, execution). The nyama boli used to contain in former times a stone called gõgoro kurube, considered to be the "mother" of the stones thrown by the warriors' sling. It was removed from the sac in case of war and carried to the battlefield by a twin walking at the head of the troops. On its surface were engraved a series of lines representing the king, the warriors, and their wives. It gathered all the souls of those dead in combat and received their blood as an offering.

794 778 The nyama boli is, moreover, responsible for the soul of the crops and a repository for the souls of sacrificed animals; it also receives the "nyama of the words" of the members. It shares with the ñõ boli the responsibility for the cultivations and confers in this way great power to the society.

The sac contains in its lower part a mixture of coagulated blood and gold, and in its upper part a mixture of charcoal powder, pepper, and honey, which gives power to the nyama with which the sac is loaded. The taboo of the nyama boli is the rapid death of victims [782] which are sacrificed to it; only slow death confers effective nyama.

Upon the ground of the sanctuary, along with the dance costume of the mask, nya, are placed small altars intended either for sale, or for the creation of the new Komo, or for individual purposes. Animal horns, both byẽ ba (literally, big horn) and byẽ ni (literally, little horn), are also placed there; they contain powder for ritual usage, korti, whose dangerous action takes place during the times the mask is taken out (1).

1. The various mixtures used for the religious practices of the Bambara

794 532 The head of the mask is usually made of bone (a human or hyena skull), or of wood painted white, black, and red. The mask, per se, is made in such a way as to frighten the future initiates. Just as the soul of a dead person, which requests offerings or threatens to drag his kin with it, is feared, so too is this fact which is in contact with the altar of souls (nimara boli) and which reflects the face of the ancestors. It also represents Faro: the mask is sometimes provided with a long beard symbolic of his hair, and lightly plastered with a layer of black earth taken from the river bank and impregnated with his power; it is sometimes smeared with the blood of a young girl who has died in the course of the ceremonies, in commemoration of the virgins annually offered to Faro in olden times.

Copper arrows (kun bye) are inserted into the skull and charms (kun kanana) are attached to them with the purpose of attacking the undesirables (noninitiates, women, or children) who approach the dance site.

"The eyes of the mask are large, so that the Komo may see and unveil everything; the nostrils are well opened for he must sniff everything, smell the good and bad of things. The mouth is twisted for the Komo does not talk; he only whistles and sings. The ears are vast so that he may hear everything, even that /150/ which each one says secretly in his heart. The chin of the mask is square, a sign of purity, decision, and clairvoyance." During the ceremonies, he silently opens his mouth. It is said that due to the presence of the altar of souls, nimara boli, "happiness penetrates him" (1). By singing, he redistributes this felicity to the audience and this is why he repeats the verses.

1. Here dun, literally, penetration of happiness.

794 532 784 841 As a rule, women, griot and noninitiates are taboo to the mask. To each of the elements composing it also belongs a particular taboo. Thus, the head of the mask must never touch menstrual blood. Any infraction would bring about "a visible change to the face" and the altars contained in the sac carried by the dancer would be without strength. For this reason, no member must participate in the ceremonies if his wife is in a menstrual period.

794 292 The costume worn by the dancer is held up by a sort of carcass (bry) made of ngolobe (1) wood used because of its flexibility, and is

1. Combretum micranthum.

enveloped with a light blanket for protection. Inside the bry are suspended various flutes (komo fle) which are blackened by the blood of sacrifices offered to "improve their sound" and which will be used in the course of the ceremonies. Along with these flutes is a little bag filled with spare spider webs. Any individual who goes under the [834] bry to dance must abstain from sexual relations for a specified period of time prior to the ceremony.

The costume (nya) which covers the carcass is made with the clothing of individuals killed by the Komo (2). Contrary to the bry, which

2. When a guilty member or a non-initiate is "killed" by the Komo, his clothing is offered to it.

has no active role but serves only to isolate the dancer inside the mask, the religious role of the costume is very important. It represents the "body and the valor of the ancestors." It is not the object of blood sacrifices, but is covered by a powder made of the bones of individuals killed by the Komo to which has been added kola nut juice. The 794 cloth is dyed with black earth taken from the river bank in exchange 292 for a small offering of copper, gold, or cereals. Drawings called 532 komo mani (literally, little people of the Komo) are made on the cloth to represent Faro on the one hand, recognizable by his long black hair, and on the other the eight ancestors who received the word. All the first agricultural implements of the Bambara are drawn with red ochre. The feathers of black, white, and red egrets are then sewn on the nya to hide /151/ the black earth, which is the spirit's abode. Two days before everything is taken out, these feathers are the object of offerings of kola nut juice, millet mash, and the blood of fowls.

794 292 794 The costume, like the head of the mask, must be seen neither by women nor by noninitiates. "Its color would change and it would become dull, making a purification necessary."

794 532 The body of the mask has two arms into which the dancer introduces his own. The arms terminate in a hook, koli (3), which is

794
532 3. Koli means nail or spur in reference to a rooster and, by extension, hook.

impregnated with black earth from the river and made of copper, Faro's metal, soaked in the venom of a viper before the hook was formed. These hooks are also annually soaked in red venom mixed with pepper. All these preparations make them dangerous weapons used for different purposes during the ceremonies.

The right hook (kinin koli) is used to kill the guilty ones or the undesirables. A slight would brings about death which is then attributed to Faro. The left hook defends members of the society against the dangers which are present, even for them, in the actions and emanations of the right hook. It contains two shards of black pottery, Faro's taboo, which keep away and thus diminish the latter's power. During the dance the Komo, wishing to protect one of the members under its jurisdiction, waves the left arm over him to attenuate the strength of the right. During funerals a gesture of the left hook will indicate the deceased's membership in the society and will assure him protection in the hereafter.

[784
823] The taboo of the copper hooks is the same as Faro's concerning this metal. Just as no one would cross the Niger wearing an object or an ornament of copper, similarly no one would wear copper in attending the Komo ceremonies.

The wearing of the mask, which is much sought after by several initiates at each ceremony, is assigned to one of them by the chief. This role involves risks which are diminished by certain precautions such as abstention from sexual relations before the ceremony. On the day of the ceremony, the elders make the wearer drink millet beer until he is completely inebriated; then for a moment they apply to his chin and abdomen the nyama boli which he will carry in a bag during the ceremony. He also puts on a ritual headdress which sometimes has incorporated in it a particle of the one belonging to the famous Soma Moriba Sidibé. The mask is then adjusted on his head, the flute slipped between his teeth, while the chief assures him of his good faith and proves to him that he runs no danger.

/152/ D. Musical Instruments

794
534 The emergence of the Komo is accompanied by rhythms played on drums, dyiri kolo (literally, bone, wood), made of hides stretched

794 778 B. In the chief's residence, there are replicas of the axe and the altars. According to the needs, they are transported to the shore of the Niger, into the fields, or to the public square during the ceremonies. The originals, on the other hand, remain sheltered from the looks of outsiders and risks of impurity. Moreover, the chief owns a special altar, the kworę ni, "soul of the kworę," /168/ which contains the spiritual principles of the members who do not belong to the Komo society. The kworę ni is placed upon the chest of a dying man and receives his soul at the moment of death as does the nimara boli of the Komo (1). It is regularly saturated with rainwater.

C. The stone of the kworę, of which the lower part is crudely carved into seven teeth called kworę fara ni, is stuck into the ground after the following objects have been buried in this site. (See Fig. 13)

1. Three thunder stones called: fara ba, "big stone"; /169/ fara bye, "stone point"; fara joli, "blood of stone." These recall the presence of Faro's power, rain, under the altar. When placing them, the following words are repeated seven times: "Help us" (1)!

1. A ka demme.

2. Three whips, the male number, testimony to the course of men who withstand the pain of the strokes without complaining. When they are buried the following words are spoken: "Let us be courageous" (2).

2. A ka farina.

3. A kongobwona axe (see p. 160) which recalls the ancestors' victory over famine; it announces harvests and future wealth.

Drawings are made on the stone dufing the annual ceremony. In the center, a black dot called faro dęzo, "womb of Faro," represents the spirit. It is framed by two series of three whips, each "to defend him," as well as by the first three of the eight ancestors (one of which was Koumabana) and by seven figures representing the members.

[184] Woman is the taboo of the Kworè. Only males may approach the sanctuary and the altars. Any circumcised male desiring to participate 794 in the ceremonies must be initiated. The postulants are brought 785 together by the chief under the Kworè tree, at the foot of which a fire is lit; each carries a twig of fiuana wood. They suffer

304 recovers part of his tere. The organ is then held up by means of a
326 small apparatus, mine naw, made of a millet stem split in two in the shape of a fork.

"Circumcision is a sacrifice" (1). It is only valid if blood has run,

1. Bolokoli ye saraka ye.

and any patient who has not wet the ground with his blood is wounded on the thigh by the circumciser. The same is true for a child born
[732 without a foreskin. This detail must, moreover, be kept secret by
582] the members of his age grade, since the revelation of a malformation might prevent the individual concerned from contracting a marriage (2).

2. A woman might believe that these malformations are the sign that the man who was operated upon has not lost his wanzo, a fact which would be a definite obstacle to marriage.

/186/ When all is finished, the operator, holding the foreskins in his hand, says these words before burying them:

"We have transferred the wanzo of the circumcised child, may the tere be well" (3).

3. Ãn ye dẽ bolokole wanzo fili la, tere ka ñe.

304 After this, the circumcised boys have their caps put first on their
292 napes and foreheads representing the east-west direction, and then on
561 the sides of their heads representing the north-south direction. All their strength resides from then on in the headpiece which they will wear night and day, without removing it, during the entire period of seclusion.

304 The approach to the site of the operation is formally forbidden to
784 women and uncircumcised males. The one who might go there out of
561 curiosity "would contract the wanzo" (wanzo ba nofe, "the wanzo follows him"). Any uncircumcised boy who might break this law would have to take the consequences at the time of his own operation

304 which would be a dangerous one (1). The same rule applies to the
784
561

1. The approach of the virulent wanzo of the uncircumcised boy acts upon those of the boys undergoing the operations and afflicts them in the genital organs.

enclosure, consisting of several huts, where the newly circumcised boys remain under the surveillance of the sema. The enclosure is situated at a distance of several tens of meters from the village in order to isolate the age grade. For all that touches them, such as clothing, sticks, sistrums, dishes, and refuse, with the exception of the cap, is impregnated with their wanzo.

561 304 [431] The newly circumcised boys receive from their parents gifts of cowrie shells and food called wanzo sababu yala, "in honor of the wanzo," to speed their recovery.

[794] On the night which precedes the sixth day after the operation, a day called daworo, the children are initiated to the Komo (2).

2. See p. 203.

The following day, the sema leads them to the edge of the river, where they wash their wounds for the first time. This act, which brings about direct intervention of the element in which Faro lives, has moreover a social meaning: it consecrates the age grade and from this moment on, the children belong for the rest of their lives to the same flã, exchanging jokes and insults which are suitable between senãnku (3). It must be noted that this very simple act of communal

3. See p. 119.

ablution constitutes the inauguration of an age grade of circumcised boys and sets off from that moment all the rights and obligations its members will have toward each other.

A meal, eaten in common and accompanied by songs and dances, ends the ceremonies of the daworo. Hereafter the ablutions are repeated daily until the wounds are healed.

304 561 881 /187/ On the last day, all that has been in contact with the newly circumcised boys is gathered together at a crossroad near the enclosure.

183 However, there is superimposed upon this natural law its application, the so-called positive law. How very odd is the aspect of this natural law beneath its external surface! For there are as many ways of envisaging the application of natural law as there are legislators, and among the Bambara, in many respects everyone is his own legislator since each has his own custom. All these [individual] customs which jostle, cross, interpenetrate and superpose each other, constitute for the European a compact mass which he calls "custom," whose thousand facets are changeable, elusive, diverse and unstable. However, under these disparate exteriors emerge general traits which are, so to speak, the framework of custom, and this will be shown in the following study of institutions.

183 784 Among the laws which the Bambara imposes on himself or on his fellows, the most widespread and, in any event, the ones most noticed by Europeans, are the taboos (tne). The Bambara forbids himself, his relatives and his congeners to do or to say certain things; and the domain of these prohibitions has, theoretically, no limits. A hasty and therefore superficial and incomplete study of what may be called "the honorable name" (dyamu) has given rise to research by ethnographers on these taboos as they affect the limited area of the dyamu; they have chosen to study taboos especially in this connection.

In actual fact, however, the taboo (tne) penetrates the entire native milieu and is really its law. The purpose is to prevent any contact whatsoever with the invisible [132] on the theory that, should such contact take place, it would inevitably unleash severe punishment upon its author unless the latter had the time and the means to purify himself at once through ritual procedures. As a result, the only person who can state what a taboo is, is one who has knowledge of the invisible and can discern its presence when the ordinary person is aware of nothing. Knowledge is the prerogative of the old (koro) and of the master (fa), who represent the ancestors and are the guardians of custom. It is also the secret of a small number of "seers," whose natural methods are ordinarily reinforced by innumerable processes of mantic.

183 784 Thus used, taboo has organized and transformed the native milieu; it has established a line of demarcation between the sacred and the profane by removing from ordinary intercourse persons, places and objects connected with the invisible and considered to be impregnated by it. However, since by its very nature it forms an incontestable and nonappealable law, it has been the favorite means of anyone in authority wishing to impose his will without fear of protest. Thus the laity has, so to speak, had to submit to a arbitrary system of law that is essentially religious. Social regulations, rules of hygiene, medical prescriptions, culinary preparations, forms of courtesy -- all these are surrounded with taboos and all have absorbed from the tne the very essence of its vitality and its constraining force.

784 593 Within the family, which is the generating force of any collective group, the individual finds himself surrounded by taboos throughout his life. They are what establish and maintain the authority of the elders (koro-u) and especially of their head (fa). Taboos impose ancestral traditions which have developed separately and become gradually superimposition from earliest times to the present, the whole of which constitute, in fact, family custom.

784 [571] Patriarchy, brotherhood, the state, and all Bambara collectivities operate in the same way, since all collectivities are in a sense modeled on the natural family.

Religion, family, and society as a whole, in short the whole of Bambara civilization, have been and continue to be largely dependent on the tne.

[133] 3. Mantic, Religion and Magic

787 Mantic. Among the Bambara, as among all the Sudanese, religion and magic are both based on a belief in a permanent revelation which the manes, the spirits and the gods give to men with regard to the events of their lives.

The various means by which man can come to know this revelation on the part of invisible beings are what is called divination or mantic. This is extra-rational knowledge since it makes known things which could not be learned through reason

000 invoked is requested or required to act.

789 There are times when on the contrary, the native is
778 inclined to hold the energy in check, in order to avoid the harm that would result from this sort of action. For this pur-
[784] pose he abstains from doing certain things; this is the origin of many taboos (tne).

The acquisition of magic power in order to gain strength or to be able to act so as to avoid being affected by magic or, finally, to be able to get rid of magic power when one is permeated by it to a dangerous point -- all these involve appropriate actions or rites whose forms and conditions only magicians or others gifted with intuition can determine.

The chronicle shows that chiefs make use of magic to try to strengthen the supernatural power which is the basis of their position. Dina Wara secretly ate a special dish made of a goat's head; Biton took special baths, whose virtues Ngolo appropriated by trickery just as Biton had done with respect to Dina Wara, his brother-in-law. All sorts of comparable practices accounted for the increase of Ngolo's "luck," that modal quality of supernatural power which confers a degree of magic potency on the possessor. This so-called "luck" has, as it were, a kind of radiation, which confers special good fortune on whatever it touches. That is why the marabouts advised Biton to live in close proximity to Ngolo so as to take advantage of the favorable atmosphere.

778 This energy is attached to everything and, especially,
768 to objects that come into direct contact with anything impregnated with it. What one wears on oneself thus becomes a sort of accumulator, and that is why the objects left upon a powerful person's death are so carefully preserved and constitute the most valuable part of his legacy. The chronicle tells us with what veneration the cap and weapons belonging to Biton were regarded.

778 Magic force is therefore acquired by means of appropri-
789 ate practices indicated by magicians; one shares its benefits by living near those entrusted with it by applying to oneself what comes from such privileged persons. Here again is a result of the continuity of matter. Whatever the case, anything

Alliance

596 614 621 784

The types of alliance between communities appear to differ widely, but in actual fact all alliances are based on a religious or magic rite and, more generally, on an oath.

Four forms of alliance particularly deserve attention: the tne or interdict, the oath, marriage, and the common cult.

I. The tne. The native regards the invisible world as a duplicate of the visible world, complete with communities. He carries the analogy even to those things which we call inanimate objects. That is why, when a native binds himself to an interdict, he is not promising to respect such and such a person or thing but, rather, the community of which he believes the person or thing to be a representative. Besides, just as the interdict applies to the whole community to which the object of the interdict belongs, it also binds all the members of the community whose fa instituted it. [224]

The basis of the alliance is the oath of the fa, any infraction of which automatically brings the most dreadful calamities upon the guilty party. It is like a sacrament, which the descendants of the fa must respect in infinitum.

The chronicle of Ségou shows us how such an oath happens to be made. Upon reaching the Niger, and having no means of crossing it, Ntchi in his peril called upon his ancestors for help. His prayer was answered: a poyon' appeared and ferried him and his people to the opposite shore. In gratitude for this service, Ntchi swore that the fish would henceforth be sacred to him and to his descendants. By this act, all poyon' became tne for Ntchi and his descendants, although this does not mean that there was a cult of the fish. It was a kind of alliance or covenant, analogous to one between human communities and with similar effects; it entailed some sort of reciprocal brotherly mutual aid. In practice, a Koulounbali descended from Ntchi must never, under any circumstances whatsoever, voluntarily harm a poyon', his tne, on pain of the most disastrous consequences. If he has done so inadvertently, he can atone with sacrifices or appropriate penance, which his own intuition or a diviner suggests. He must always, in so far as the need arises,

596 assist his tne, while showing it the greatest respect. The mystical basis of this alliance sometimes causes the native to behave in a particular way toward his tne: he will not look straight at it; he will not touch it, unless absolutely forced to do so, and then he will apologize and ask forgiveness.

Anything may be the object of a tne, but there is probably not a single Bambara family which does not have some animal as tne. Expressions which the natives in general and the Bambara in particular use to make foreigners understand their relations with this animal tne have made many Europeans think that the native regards the animal as a relative in the literal sense of the word. This is not the case, as we have just seen, and consequently Bambara totem is a purely European invention (1). [225]

1. It should be understood that the tne has many sources besides one mentioned here, which is the only one pertinent to this chapter. Thus, Bala refused to pronounce any word having the syllable da (p.); Sounsan abstained from the kulé (p. , footnote 1).

596 II. The oath. In native society, a man who is ambitious or merely anxious to establish a powerful community can do so only with the support of faithful allies. Massa and Biton not only succeeded in dominating their young companions, but they also bound them closely through the oath and the cult.

Undoubtedly all the founders of powerful communities have not proceeded in exactly the same way, but all of them have employed analogous methods. An isolated individual can accomplish nothing in this social milieu where everything rests on these strongly organized collectivities, the communities. Any Bambara eager for well-being and peace will seek out and attach himself to a "powerful protector" (dyigi seme) capable of providing him with this security, even if it means the loss of his own

621
581 Koulibali of Ségou, founded Bamako, and changed its name to Niaré
583 in becoming Bambara.

The tné: the taboo concerning an animal or some object.
621 The basis of this alliance is the oath of the fa not to kill or eat the
784 object of the taboo. All the generations following this ancestor must respect the taboo ad infinitum.

Thus, the Kéita have the hippopotamus for tné; the Traoré, the Dambélé, and the Warata have the panther; the Samaké, the elephant; the Koubilali of Ségou, the hippopotamus; those of Issa Ber, the m'polio [a fish]; others have the mole cricket (n'gere) and the striped mouse (n'kelika); the Niaré, Sisé, Silla, Doukouré, and the Daramé, the python, etc.

The oath: this seals a pact of dyonge fraternization. Each
621 party to the contract extracts some drops of blood from his forearm
608 which is mixed with goat's milk. Swearing by his ancestors, he states the conditions of the alliance and drinks part of the beverage. This alliance binds the parties to it and all their descendants ad
[582] infinitum. It entails a prohibition or, contrariwise, a recommendation of marriage between members of the two communities, and establishes solidarity between the two communities which owe each other mutual assistance. In the framework of this alliance is the cathartic alliance termed sénankuya, which, besides the preceding obligations, governs the system of purifications.

The sénankuya: unites certain specific groups bearing differ-
621 names within the same village, but can also have an intertribal
608 character; ex.: Mandingue-Peul. Humblot observed the following
648 alliances at Kankan: Kéita-Fofana; Kondé-Traoré; Kéita-Béreté-Sérigou-Sissé; [56] Kala-Kéita-Kouyaté; Kourouma-Koma; Kourouma-Dabo; Kourouba-Konaté-Kamara-Bagayoko; Konaté-Dougoumoko; Konaté-Sidibé. This system of alliance in which
[783] the two allies are equal and complementary governs the mechanism of the purifications, notably by the insult, and the duties of reciprocal assistance (1). Formerly, when a sénanku was reduced to slavery,

1. M. Griaule, "L'alliance cathartique" [The Cathartic Alliance], Africa, Vol. XVIII, 1948.

776 time; it is the noblest work, and one to which every member of the Bambara race must be subject. Faro is represented by a spiral, munu; the vibrating movements of the spiral are the same that animate the daily movements of the sun. These movements are materialized in a basket-work headdress, yugu, which has eight whorls and which formerly was reserved for kings. Faro's face is white, because he took it from the spirit of the air, Teliko, who was an albino. His ears are protected by two fins; his hands are of different sex; his tail is palmate, and his breast is of copper. Albinos and copper are the spirit's preferred sacrifices. All atmospheric manifestations denote his presence; his principal seat is the Niger River, but he has the gift of ubiquity and haunts all waters. Faro is accompanied by helpers, the most representative of whom is the bolokuruni, one-armed blacksmith of a black race. His air messenger is the swallow, who carries the
[824] fertilizing word. Certain plants are in permanent rapport with him: the Yayalẽ, the Ngoyõ (tomato), which is compared to blood. Thus, small fields of tomatoes reserved for the cult of Faro are cultivated in each village. All metals are reserved for Faro. The Bozo, born of Faro's first twins, enjoy a privileged position because they were not subject to the defilement caused by Mousso Koroni and can enter into direct communication with the spirit. In addition, they are the masters of the water.

776 The cult of Faro includes a whole series of taboos, such as the
784 black earth of the river which may not be used by the potters and
841 butter which may not be kept in water. But the principal taboo is menstrual blood, originally provoked by the disorders of Mousso Koroni.

B. Conception of Man

774 The Bambara conceive man as a microcosm, a resumé of the
761 totality of beings and things. The principle of duality contained in the original creative thought is realized in man by his twin souls which compensate for the separation of the sexes. In man, Faro is represented by the ni (soul) and the dya (double). Pemba is represented by the téré (the character, force, and conscience) and the nyama (which is the téré when it leaves its corporeal support after
[826] death). Mousso Koroni is represented by the Wanzo (evil force with

825 village, I thought at first that here lay the reason for this rest, extraor-
787 dinary during the time of the most intensive hoeing. Not at all; the
pagan Bambara were resting, and the women were giving their hus-
[262] bands and children dégé (millet flour mixed with milk and honey
water) in obedience to a hyena's command. The hyena, it was said
-- and all the sorcerers confirmed this -- had emerged from its dumb-
ness, its tongue had been loosed, and it had predicted to the people
of the west that a plague even more terrible than that of the cater-
pillars would descend on the country. Only one means to avert it
remained: to refrain from going to the fields on Friday and to treat
themselves to dégé, the food so dear to Moslems.

482 On my excursions I have often met men and women carrying
757 on their heads a gourd or a basket containing a handful of leaves or
824 some bundles of roots, and apart from the customary greetings it
● 784 has been impossible for me to get a word out of them. And why this
silence? They were carrying a medicinal plant, a remedy which
would lose all its virtue and all its efficacy if they conversed on the
way, and they had to take care not to trample such-and-such a plant
that grew on the edge of the path.

757 The Bambara quite readily names the plants and herbs whose
753 curative powers are known to him, and yet in the presence of a sick
784 person he will very seldom give you the name of the remedy the
latter is taking, or the names of the roots and leaves that make up
his poultices. Sickness, he believes is a force, a power which tortures
our bodies. He is afraid that in naming the remedy he would pro-
vide this power with a weapon against its healing virtue, which is
another force or power. He sets the second power against the first
to make it leave.

811 It is evident that he attributes bits of reason and emotion to
784 everything, that he attributes human feelings to all that is animate
and inanimate. The "taboos" are not merely one piece of evidence
of this, they are an irrefutable proof of this attitude.

2. Taboos

614 825 784 /16/ The Bambara people are divided into several families or lineages each of which bears a special name, or diamou, and sees at its head certain plants or animals as protectors and patrons. The Djara lineage claims kinship with the lion, the kana, or iguana (1), the

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1. A kind of large lizard resembling a small alligator. It lives on river banks and near ponds, and though it prefers the land and climbs trees, it likes to play in the water. The French commonly call it gueule tapée /"smart jaw"/.

boumou, or dondol; the Dambélé with a large black monkey called Ngoba; the Tankara with a spiney silk-cotton tree, the dondol; the Kouloubali with the wild pig /biche cochon?/, the Mpolio (2), and

2. A slimy and spined fish.

the panther. There is not a lineage that does not have one or even several tné, or taboos. As will be seen below, lineages of the same name often regard themselves as bound by a tie of fraternity and friendship, while a difference in the tné shows, that a division occurred at some particular time.

Europeans, churchmen, military men, and civilians, usually call the Bambara tné "totems." Since Long, the one to speak first of "totemism" and "totems," this question has been treated at length by serious and distinguished authors, by competent authorities. Their definitions cannot be applied to the Bambara tné. Striking as is the resemblance of some of them to the totems of the Redskins and the Australians, I cannot apply to them the definition given by Nicolay in speaking of the Redskins: "The Redskins also believe in the existence of spirits peculiar to individuals (as fetishes are to Africans) and which, in animal form, bear the names of totems." (3) The

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3. /Fernand/ Nicolay, /Curiosités des lois et coutumes./ Histoire des croyances, /superstitions,/ moeurs, /usages et/ coutumes /(selon le plan du Décalogue) /Curiosities among Laws and Customs. The History of Beliefs, Superstitions, Manners, Ways, and Customs (according to the outline of the Decalogue)/, / Vol. 1, Book 1, Chap. 1. /Paris, 1901.?

Bambara tné are completely different from fetishes and have nothing in common with the latter. In a chapter (1901, p. 61) of his work, "myths, cultes et religions /Myths, Cults, and Religions/, A. Lang defines totemism for us thus:" The word "totemism" or "totamism" was applied for the first time by Long... to the customs of the Indians.. which acknowledges kinship with animals.... Totemists spare animals which are of their flesh and blood...." According to A. Lang, the Redskins and Australians believe themselves to be truly and physically related to the animal-totem, and they number among their grandparents /17/ a doe, a toad, an ant, a rabbit, etc. All actual physical kinship is of course communicated by means of blood, and two beings who have in their veins the blood of the same individual are related. In order to be of the same flesh and blood as their totems, the Redskins and Australians thus believe themselves to be actual sons of an ancestor who formerly was a doe, toad, ant, rabbit.... In Chapter II of his work Histoire des croyances, moeurs et coutumes, Nicolay gives one to understand that the Redskins believe that at the moment of death the spirit of their ancestor found shelter in the body of the animal which serves as totem; is it possible that Lang, who is silent on this point, is unaware of Indian beliefs in metamorphosis and metempsychosis? He does not report the fact anywhere in his work Myths, cultes et religions, but whatever hypothesis one may make on this point, the fact remains that according to him Indian beliefs imply a real physical kinship. If one assumes that the first ancestors of the Indian were changed or metamorphosed at some

614 825 784 given moment into a doe, toad, ant, or rabbit -- a singular evolution if ever there was one, one may suppose that at the moment of the metamorphosis these animals did not exist and they are all, men and animals, of the same flesh and the same blood; or, more plausibly, the ancestors changed themselves into already existing animals, procreating among them does, toads, ants, or rabbits as they had formerly reproduced human beings, so that in killing one of these totem animals a Redskin must always be afraid that he is killing a son or grandson of the ancestor, or some other of the latter's descendants, and therefore of his own flesh and blood (1).

1. /sic/ A. Lang does not seem to doubt that the people of whom he speaks -- Redskins, Tahitians, and Africans -- give a very broad meaning to the words "father," "mother," "brother," "wife," "son," and that they customarily use them to refer to persons with whom they have no bond of kinship.

[578] There is nothing like this for a Bambara. To call someone a wild animal is in his eyes an insult, and to call a man the son of a dog (oulou den) is enough to make him angry, to throw him into a fit of anger; even if he has a dog for a tné, that is a wrong which will sooner or later be avenged. He does not number among his ancestors a dog, or a panther, a lion or a snake. A Kouloubali would be much surprised to learn that a doe gave birth to him, and there is not a Tankara who thinks he has /18/ the sap of the dondol or the juice of its fruit in his veins. When a Djara calls himself the son of a lion, or a Dambélé the son of a big black monkey, what they say must be understood in a very broad sense, as an analogy. We ourselves say of a special benefactor: "He is my father," "he is my mother," "he is my all."

171 614 825 784 Here the Bambara is akin to the Christian Quichés of Guatemala of whom D. G. Brinton speaks in his "Nagualism," 1294, -- O. Stoll

171 614 825 784 in his Die Ethnologie der Indianerstämme von Guatemala /The Ethnology of the Indian Tribes of Guatemala/, Leyden, 1882. This work is cited by Lang in Chap. III of Mythes, cultes et religions. His tné is a friend, a protector, and may be defined as follows: it is an animate or inanimate being entitled to the respect and veneration of an entire lineage, family, or clan, in recognition of an outstanding service which has prevented the lineage, family, or clan from disappearing or becoming extinct, or has preserved them from a misfortune.

773 614 539 784 825 Every tne has its legend. Although in the mouth of the black man the tale may be embellished and decorated a little so that it varies somewhat, the substance remains the same. I will translate a few of these legends, preserving both their form and their substance.

Legend of the Two Kouloubali

The people were at war; everywhere there were only fugitives. The Kouloubali lineage had been cruelly stricken and reduced to two members, two brothers lost in the bush with their wives and children. The elder who followed /sic/ his brother at a distance, (since for fear of being surprised, they avoided camping in the same place). He arrived at the bank of a swollen river and saw he could not cross, there being no boats. "Where can I flee now?" he lamented. "I am in the hands of my enemies! For me and my family it is death or slavery." A mpolio was passing by; it heard, was touched by compassion, and, raising its big, bearded head out of the water, called to him: "I can take you over, have no fear!" The elder of the Kouloubali and his family, with their weapons and baggage, settled themselves on the slimy back of the strange fish and crossed the river. Then he said to the fish: "Listen, good mpolio, my brother and his family are over there on the bank. Do not render them the /19/ service that you rendered me, for he is an ingrate, one without a heart, and he might kill you." -- "Kill me? Come now!" and the fish dove, disappeared, and emerged far over near the other bank, at the moment when the young Kouloubali was wondering how his older brother had been able to cross such a wide

773 and deep river when there were no boats. "It is thanks to me," said
614 the mpolio, "place yourself on my spine as he did." And so the
539 younger brother and his wives crossed the river.
784 The young Kouloubali was heartless. When the women had put
825 down their gourds and baskets on the bank, at the moment when the mpolio leaped up and raised the full height of its body out of the water in order to dive and disappear, he threw his spear at it. The fish struggled for an instant, the water foamed, reddened, and then there was quiet: it was dead.

The family of the young Kouloubali cut up the animal and, without shame or remorse, invited the family of the elder brother to come to the feast. "Eat the mpolio," cried the latter, "never! And may there be a curse on any of mine that dares to eat it." Since that day, the mpolio has been the tné of the descendants of the elder Kouloubali.

To some extent it is also the tné of the descendants of the younger brother, but they eat it except for the head.

Legend of a Branch of the Taraoulé

A woman saw all her children die, and so she trembled for her last born, a sickly, puny little boy whom her milk did not help. One day she was alone in her hut crouched on her mat with the child on her knees, spinning cotton when she began to cry and moan: "You will not live, you will join your elder brothers, you will go away and leave me alone." A spitting snake was passing by; he came in and gently coiled himself around the body of the child. The mother let out a cry, and the neighbors came running.... The snake slowly uncoiled and left the dwelling while the child held his arms out to it and smiled. He did not die but became strong and healthy, for the snake had drunk all the gnâma, all elements of illness that were in him. From that day on the Taraoulé branch of which this child is the father does not eat the spitting snake, or n'gorono, for the curse of the ancestor would descend on them: that is, the spitting snake is their tné. /20/

Legend of Another Taraoulé Branch

A woman was fetching wood in the forest when she was seized with the pains of childbirth. "All alone, what will become of me?" she cried. "I have no one to help me; who will wash my child? Oh! I will take a corpse home with me." She knelt by her load of wood, gave birth to her child, collapsed, and lost consciousness. A big black monkey was munching fruit in a near-by tree; it saw her and was moved.... It played midwife, washed the little creature, rocked him in its arms, and when the mother came to herself it gave her back her little boy. From that day on no descendant of this Taraoulé branch eats ngoba; this big black monkey is their tné, and the ancestor would curse anyone who did so.

Legend of the Two Djara

Two Djara brothers with wives and children were fleeing before their enemies. Overcome with fatigue they sat down in the shade of a dondol determined to go no farther. Actually, they were so plagued by thirst that they could not go on. An iguana was wandering in the vicinity; it had pity on the two Djara, so it climbed the dondol and, working with its tail and feet, succeeded in producing a gentle dew under the tree. All were able to quench their thirst with the sap held in the calyxes of this tree's blossoms. "The kana (iguana) shall from now on be my tné," said the elder, "and I curse any one of my descendants who kills or eats it." -- "Think it over," said the younger, "is it not to the dondol that we owe our lives? Is it not its sap that quenched our thirst? Would it not be better to take this tree as tné?" The two Djara argued, could never agree, and separated. The kana became the tné of the older branch, and the boumou, or dondol, that of the younger branch.

Legend of the Samaké

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614 My grandfather has often told it to me; he himself got it from
539 his ancestors.... A Samaké -- I cannot tell whether he had been
784 fording the river or driving the stakes to which fishing mats are fastened
825 -- was seized by an alligator which dragged him to the depths of its den. The alligator did not kill him, /21/ for it had fed.... Leaving the unhappy man to his sad thoughts, it withdrew.... It did not go away, however, and from time to time it hit the water with its tail at the entrance of the hole, making it quite clear that there was only one way out and that this was the door. Stretched out in the ooze, the unhappy Samaké moaned: "Who will save me from those terrible claws and those powerful teeth?" An ant lion at the top of the den was watching for flies and ants in the bottom of its pit; it had pity on the man and, working with its two horns, succeeded in bringing in a ray of sunlight to revive the hopes of the Samaké. "Will I be saved?" he asked the ant lion. Two pinches of sand were the answer, and he understood. Working with both hands, he helped the ant lion; the hole grew and he was able to get through. He escaped. When the alligator re-entered its den, exhausted with hunger, it was disappointed not to find its prey there. So as not to invite the curse of their ancestor, the descendants of this Samaké respect and venerate the géré, or ant lion, and it is their tné. Other Samaké have the elephant (sama) for their tné.

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825 These few legends are sufficient; they all show us that although
811 the Bambara believes that the bond with the tné is simply one of
772 fraternity, friendship, and gratitude and not a bond of real and physical kinship, he nonetheless does not fail to attribute reason and emotion to everything around him, to animals and to plants. In nature he does not find pure matter; rather he attributes human feelings in some degree to everything, and throughout he sees a force, a power, an intangible, which he does not know how to define and which thinks, loves, laments, and weeps.

582 The Bambara tné differs further from the totem of the Redskin
614 and the Australian: it creates no obstacle to marriage between lineages of the same tne or of different tne. Each man takes a wife wherever he finds her and where he thinks best, and through these alliances the lineages mingle, cross, and recross. They do not merge, however,
[537] since the husband keeps his name, or diamou, and with it his tné; he does not take that of his wife. As to the children, they have their father's tné, and his only, and it is his name, or diamou, they bear. /22/

784 The Bambara tné is nothing less than a taboo /sic/. The word itself is very vague and difficult to translate into our French language. It implies primarily a prohibitive command, an order not to do, not to act. Whenever a competent authority -- an alleged genie, such as a boli (who speaks and gives his oracles through the mouth of a herald or interpreter, the djélimac) or a priest of the genii (djiné) believed to preside over the elements, the dougoutigi (who actually does nothing without consulting his council and the sorcerers) whenever the sorcerer (the intermediary between man and the invisible world) or a priest of the shades of the ancestors' (1) --, that is, an

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1. This term seems to me the most accurate. Undoubtedly, the gouatigi, or head of the family makes the sacrifices, but his position does not always correspond to what we call in French the father of the family. He is not always married; although all the family except his mother, brothers, and sisters call him m'fa, "my father," the word "father" should be taken in a very broad sense, as he is quite often only a grand-uncle, an uncle, or a cousin.

authority of a religious character, forbids eating, killing, or looking at an animal; cutting, breaking, or using an object; drinking such-

784 and-such a liquid, that animal, object, or liquid assumes a certain sacredness, and the Bambara calls it a tné. It thus conforms to the definition of a taboo that A. Lang gives us in Chapter III of his work Mythes, cults et religions, and Nicolay in Chapter II, Volume I, of his work Histoires des croyances, moeurs, coutumes also says: "To be taboo is to be marked by a religious sign."

The tné, or taboos, are legion in Bambara country. Not only does each lineage have its own, but the goua, or families, the confraternities, villages, individuals, genii, and plants also have theirs. Many are permanent in that they are perpetuated from generation to generation. Others, on the contrary, are impermanent; they pass, fall into disuse, disappear, or are dropped as soon as they become inconvenient. All depends upon the authority from which they are derived.

Taboos can be divided into five groups. There are lineage taboos, family taboos, taboos of the djiné genii and the boli genii, and finally plant taboos. I have given some legends concerning lineage taboos (see p. 8 ff.); these are permanent, passed on from generation to generation, and cannot disappear. /23/ They embody the idea of the ancestor, not in the sense that they merge and become one, but rather because the animal or plant has saved the stock by saving him. The tné have become the fathers of the Bambara in the broad sense of the word; they are, on an ancestor's name, or diamou, like armorial bearings on a shield, and a Bambara cannot rid himself of them. The ancestor has bound himself to the tné as a result of a service rendered, and his oath has made the union so close that if one disappeared the other would disappear with it -- how could one repudiate someone who is, and was, an ancestor and whose name, or diamou one bears!

784 773 262 Family taboos also have their legends and resemble those of lineages. They are different, however; the service was rendered to a member of the family and not to its head. In addition, the taboos are less extensive and include only a part of a species or race. To cite just one example, certain Dambélé may not buy, raise, kill, or eat a da-n-fign, or black dog, but they are not thereby prevented

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from owning, killing, or eating a dog of another color; a dish of dog is even a delicacy served during orgies in honor of the fetishes Nia, Komo, Kono, Nama, etc. The dog is taboo for them, but only the black dog, and the reason is as follows: A Dambélé family was working their fields, and every noon the wife in charge of cooking brought them gruel. One fine day the cook, seeing her child asleep, laid him on the mat and left.... Hardly had she reached the field when the big black dog arrived, yapping and whining, running toward the village and coming back, and yapping and whining even more. This performance puzzled everyone, and they all dropped their hoes and followed the dog back to the village. The dwelling had been consumed by fire and was only a pile of ashes.... "My child, my child," cried the mother at once, desperate and wild with grief.... And the dog pranced around her, put its paws on her shoulders, licked her with joyful growls, and seemed to say to her: "Have no fear, I have saved him." It had in fact saved the child; seeing the fire in the dwelling, it thought of the child, took him gently in its mouth, and carried him to the hut where karité nuts were being roasted. They found him there, well and safe, sound asleep, and from that day on they took the black dog as tné; all the family respected and /24/ venerated it, and their descendants still respect and venerate it today.

784 Family tné sometimes become taboo for a whole village. For example, where the Dambélé of the black dog are powerful because of their number and especially through their affinal ties, members of outside lineages avoid raising these dogs or eating their flesh, out of respect for the old people and to spare the feelings of their wives and families. Little by little the custom takes root and the animal becomes a tné or taboo for everyone.

Its durability, however, is nowhere near that of a lineage taboo. A Dambélé woman married into a village where the black dog is not taboo may refrain as much as possible from eating its flesh, but she will not fear it long. Little by little the taboo is forgotten, and only a vague memory stays with her: "An dougou tné do, for the village I came from it is taboo," she may say, but it will seem to her that for her it is no longer so. As to members of outside

lineages, they usually abandon such a taboo as soon as they leave the village, and if, because of the habit they have acquired they abide by it until their death, their children give it up.

Carrying his organization into the world of invisible beings, the Bambara endows the latter also with tné, or taboos, and make these his own. Not only are the sacred woods taboo, together with all they contain, but there are also ways of acting and behaving which displease the spirits, and some animals have the capability of making them angry. When a woman comes back from the forest with her fagot of wood on her head, she must unbind it before entering the village or do so on the public square. In some places shoes are removed at the door of the entrance hut, or b'lon through which the village is entered; elsewhere the people take off their caps; and no one ever whistles in the lanes without incurring the hatred of the invisible beings. Partridges, which are numerous in the fields around the walls, must never get into the village except dead and plucked, and children who catch them in their nets never break this custom. [187] If by mischance a partridge flies across the village and cackles in passing, all the population is in turmoil, and for three nights thereafter men, women, and children sleep under the stars. Often, /25/ depending on the oracles of the sorcerer, they even leave their homes and build them again a short distance away.

The génii called boli are the terror of women, children, and the uninitiated, who cannot touch any object used in the ritual and who may not enter their sacred woods and their sanctuaries. The boli (1) have tné, which are taboo for their owners and those that

1. The term boli denotes any evil fetish, and hence any object used by an evil spirit or demon as his dwelling. See Chap. VII, 1.

sacrifice to them, and which sometimes also become taboo for their children. One of the strangest is the tné or taboo of the Bara, which is millet beer, or d'lo. Its owner and the person sacrificing to him must avoid drinking beer if possible, and if the habit is too established

776 among them, they take a complete bath before touching the fetish
784 or sacrificing to it. Usually the tné of the boli is an animal, and the
778 whole family takes it for their own. A palm rat, succulent as it may be to a Bambara palate, will never be eaten by the owners of Bama-n-djigi and their children: it is the tné, or taboo, of the fetish.

784 I have found no tné for animals, but many trees have them, as do medicinal plants, and when these must be used for particular purposes, they must not be placed in contact with, whatever they abhor or are supposed to detest and which in the eyes of the black man is nothing less than their tné, or taboo.

Men and women, young and old, must venerate and respect their tné and those of the genii, and even children know from their earliest years that they cannot see, kill, or eat a certain animal, that they cannot touch, cut, or break a given tree or plant, without incurring either the curse of the ancestor or the anger of the genie and losing their sight.

The severity of the punishments which hang over every Black who forgets the respect due to the tné (especially to his lineage tné and those of the boli fetishes), and hence the fear of incurring them, seems at first quite tyrannical. It is not as great as one would think, however, since the Bambara is a very good casuist when his person and his interests are at stake, and all the prohibitions except those against consuming certain /26/ meats and certain drinks are but a game.

For example, a Dambelé who sees a band of black monkeys ruining his fields and stealing his crops does nothing to stop his dogs from chasing them, and if a friend of an outside lineage comes to help and shoots them, he will have no regrets. A greater confidence is shown by a Djara when a lion ravages his herds: he goes to meet it and begs it to go away, which, according to the Black it always does.

784 When the carcass of a taboo /sic/ is found by one of the people
766 of the lineage which it protects, it usually receives the honors of burial. The Djara, whose tné is the lion, even perform the burial with ceremony: the women weep, the drums beat, and the men offer the lion a piece of cloth, in which it is rolled before being put in the grave.

784 One might perhaps think that it would be very difficult not to
602 see one's tné....? In the Sudan good manners require that people
576 discipline their glances from their earliest years. A son-in-law lowers his eyes in the presence of his mother-in-law, a daughter-in-law turns her back at a three-quarters angle out of modesty in the presence of her father-in-law, and when a lover goes to win over the father of his fiancée, she runs away and hides. Any Negro, however poor his manners, will direct his look no one knows where, into space or upon his toes, every time he greets anyone and hears his news, and will chat with a person for a quarter hour without ever looking at him. No more is asked for the tné. Undoubtedly a Bambara shields himself with both hands in its presence... and he plays the young daughter-in-law; he knows well how to differentiate between seeing and looking, and he knows how to tell you at the time, however little he is accused: "Né y'a yé tigné, n'ka, nè gné tount'a la, né m'a flè. I saw it certainly, but I did not leave my eyes on it, I did not look at it."

3. The Gnâma

789 The tné are rendered sacred, above all, by the curse of the
778 ancestor. Nothing is so much feared by the Bambara. To be cursed,
676 and cursed by his father, is the greatest evil that can befall a man; his wives would run away from him, his children would blush to call him "father," his /27/ friends would abandon him, the people of the village would be terrified to speak to him; he would have to flee. And where would he go? The gnâma of his father, of his ancestor, of his fetish's tné, would cling to his steps and follow him everywhere. Only suffering would be left for him; sickness, hunger, poverty, and humiliation would be his lot and, rejected by humanity, he would die in despair.

789 The word gnâma is very difficult to translate. Does its equivalent
778 exist in our French language? Gnâma is a force, a power, or also perhaps a /kind of/ energy, a fluid possessed by every man, every animal, every living being; it never disappears and continues to exist even

4. The dja

774 778 Here again is a word very difficult to translate into our French language. We use dja to translate the words "phantoms," "pictures," "photographs," "shadows," "that which is reflected by water or by a mirror"; but there are other meanings, and there is no question of shadows or images in the following sentences, for example: a dja tikéra, a dja oulila, misiou dja oulila. They mean: "he is afraid," "he is crazed," "the cows are crazed." In the eyes of the Bambara, the dja is not only the shadow, the image, or the outline of objects, it is also that which makes them manifest. It is a force, a power common to beings of all kinds, and even though it cannot be compared to a genie or a soul, they nevertheless think of it as a kind of being which they are unable to define but which has its own existence and can act of its own accord.

[791] 774 784 The gné-fla, whom I mentioned when speaking of the souba, are feared because they see the genii and our private thoughts, and also because they practice sympathetic magic, by taking possession of that which makes the shadows of persons and things. The Bambara is convinced that his dja can be taken, and when this occurs he henceforth no longer casts a shadow. Although, because of their fear of the Europeans and in some cases because they have long been in contact with them, the Bambara may readily pose before a camera, one can nevertheless say that, in general, they do not like to be photographed. Particularly the old people object and begin to resist /42/ as soon as they see a lens. They have the notion in their heads that their dja will escape from them to make an imprint on the plate and leave its form there, and that this form will comprise the portrait, thus placing a part of their being in the hands of the operator and [828] themselves at his mercy. They fear lest, as a result, they lose their shadows and the ability to cast them, and thus become idiots.

774 Even though the Bambara cannot explain their ideas on this subject, these closely resemble the theories of Mr. de Rochas, discussed by Monseigneur Méric in Volume II of his work, Imagination et Prodiges /Imagination and Marvels/ /Paris, 1905/. The dja is something similar to what English psychologists call a double and

881 This quiet life, this life of retreat, wearies the young boys and girls. At the end of four to five weeks they get hotheaded, they become insubordinate, and want to go home, for they are healed. Since the Negro man and woman appointed to watch them no longer insist, the council of elders meets and declares their task finished. In the afternoon when the sun, still high above the horizon, gathers all its rays to cast them furiously for one last time before going out in a purple disk, under the sacred trees and in the courts in front of the huts of the girls, the heads of the quarters make their gestures and simultaneously, without taking breath, recite their formulas and spit and then proceed to the exorcisms. "Bissimillahi (a phrase which in the mouth of a Bambara has not at all the meaning "in the name of God," but rather signifies "everything goes as desired"), our children are healed and they are going home, under the paternal roof; spirits that watch over them, spirits that protect them, let them go!"

881 There is a reason for this exorcism. Since the day when the
•184 blacksmith's razor, all shining, was lifted to cut, the little Negroes have been under the tutelage of fiercely jealous spirits. That is even one of the chief reasons why they are set apart and live far from the world, its ceremony and its work. No circumcised or excised child can set foot in a village hut, not even in that of their parents; their invisible protectors draw after them a whole series of evils, and wherever they are forced to enter they bring ruin and desolation (1).

1. O be n'wanso bla mala, "this causes misfortune to fall on a man."

To let one of these boys or girls enter one's home is to invite, if not death, at least sickness, bad luck, or the most dreadful poverty. To guard against such misfortunes, /194/ the Bambara must drive away these spirits, and since their assistance is considered useless, they are thanked with arm gestures and spitting.

881 When the exorcisms are over, the young brood scatters and runs everywhere into the huts; in the public square and in the alleys one hears interminable greetings and endless chatter. But the Bambara are too fond of drinking and eating, and they must celebrate the